

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Los Angeles Region**

**Executive Officer's Report  
Dennis A. Dickerson, Executive Officer**

**January 26, 1998**

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\*\*\* The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption

\*\*\* For a list of simple ways to reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see the tips at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/news/echallenge.html>

### **Arcadia Wellfield - Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) Issued to Mobil**

Regional Board staff has been working with Mobil Oil Corporation, the City of Santa Monica and USEPA on the MTBE problems at the City's Arcadia Wellfield. A substantial evaluation effort and some cleanup have been accomplished at the former Mobil station site. However, staff reached an impasse with the representatives of Mobil in regards to additional work needed at the site. In order to properly assess the impacts on the drinking water aquifer at the Arcadia Wellfield, Regional Board staff has directed Mobil to conduct the long-term pump test of Well Numbers 4 and 5 which belong to the City. Until that test is conducted and we are able to see how that aquifer responds to significant stress, we cannot adequately evaluate all the elements of a remediation plan or predict their efficacy. Mobil has argued that the long-term pump test should not be conducted. Cleanup and Abatement Order 98-001 was issued to Mobil Oil Corporation on January 7, 1998.

### **Water Quality Assessment**

State Board recently directed Regional Boards to assess water quality and update 303(d) lists of impaired waterbodies. This effort is to be completed by early March. In light of the major effort that Region 4 put into the 1996 water quality update and limited data collection subsequent to this effort, staff intend to focus assessment efforts on chloride concerns in the Santa Clara River and Calleguas Creek watersheds. Accordingly, staff have scheduled workshops in Ventura on January 28th, and in Monterey Park on January 30th. Also, staff will devote a portion of the Ventura Workshop to work with concerned parties on the on-going Chloride Study, which was initiated as follow-up to the Board's adoption of a Chloride Policy in January 1997. To date, concerned parties have reviewed available information on chloride irrigation standards and identified significant sources of chloride. The next major step will be to start quantifying the significant sources of chloride.

### **Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)**

Recently, there has been heightened attention on the need for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Last month, several environmental groups notified the US EPA of their intent to sue the EPA for alleged failure to oversee implementation of certain provisions of the Clean Water Act in Region 4. In particular, these environmental groups are focusing on the need to develop and implement water quality attainment strategies (i.e. TMDLs) for impaired surface waters. To date,

there have been limited discussions among the environmental groups, the US EPA, and the State and Regional Board concerning specific reasons for a lawsuit. In addition, the environmental groups are conducting an extensive review of the Regional Board's files related to water quality assessments, lists of impaired waterbodies, and TMDLs.

### **Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project**

On December 11, 1997, the Bay Watershed Council of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project elected Mr. Burt Margolin to succeed Mr. Charles Vernon as Chair of the Council. Mr. Margolin is currently the Director of Public Policy at the law firm of Brady and Berliner, where he leads a Health Policy Group specializing in state and federal health care financing issues. Mr. Margolin is a former member of the California State Assembly (1982-1994) where he served as Chair of several Assembly Committees on health-related issues and as a member of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. He authored several health and environmental bills, including the 1986 "Bottle Bill."

The Council also elected three Vice-Chairs -- SWRCB Board Member Mary Jane Forster, Los Angeles City Councilmember Ruth Galanter, and Redondo Beach City Councilmember Robert Pinzler.

### **Oxnard Plain Workshop**

A workshop will be held in Ventura on February 26, 1998, to discuss with stakeholders what measures can be taken to reduce adverse impacts of domestic, agricultural, and industrial activities on the Oxnard forebay and plain areas.

### **Perchlorate Issues**

In June, staff reported Perchlorate (as ammonium perchlorate) has been identified in several drinking water supply wells in the San Gabriel Valley, Pasadena and Santa Clarita/Newhall areas. Ammonium perchlorate is a chemical which has been used in the manufacturing of rocket fuel. Since the initial report, over 200 active drinking water wells in the San Gabriel Valley have been tested and only seven have detected perchlorate concentrations in excess of the Department of Health Services (18 ppb) drinking water action level. Because there is currently no practical method for economically removing Perchlorate to meet drinking water standards, four wells have been taken out of service, two wells are being blended with other clean water sources to meet quality standards, and one well was already inactive. The Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster has established an advisory group including federal and state agencies, water companies, and industry groups to address the cleanup issues of perchlorate in groundwater. The Regional Board is represented in this advisory group.

An initial screening of technologies available for treatment of perchlorate has been completed. Ion exchange and biological treatment technologies appear to be promising. Funding has been allocated by the San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and other local stakeholders to finance at least two pilot perchlorate treatment projects in the Valley. Board staff is providing the necessary regulatory oversight to facilitate the implementation of these projects. Attached is a news article from the Pasadena Star News dated January 12, 1998 regarding cleanup efforts.

### **Tapia Permit Appealed**

On November 3, 1997, the Regional Board renewed the NPDES permit for Tapia Wastewater Reclamation Facility operated by Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (Las Virgenes). The renewed permit includes a prohibition to discharge to Malibu Creek from May 1 to October 31, and effluent limits for nutrients (nitrates and phosphates). Since November 3rd, the following occurred:

1. On December 3, 1997, Las Virgenes submitted a petition to the State Board for a review of the

November 3rd action of the Regional Board. The petition did not specify the reasons nor portions of the permit to be reviewed but only indicated that Las Virgenes will supplement its petition after it has completed the review of the renewed permit.

2. On December 3, 1997, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Heal the Bay, Santa Monica BayKeeper, and Dr. Jeff Harris, jointly, also appealed the November 3rd action alleging insufficient and inappropriate limitations for nutrients.

3. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducted a streamflow assessment of the impact of the discharge prohibition and concluded that the prohibition is "likely to exacerbate low-flow conditions in Malibu Creek and adversely affect steelhead". NMFS recommends that adverse effects and "take" be avoided or an incidental "take" permit be obtained under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act.

4. On December 30, 1997, Board staff received a request from Las Virgenes to amend the NPDES permit by adding a discharge outfall to a storm drain that flows to Calabasas Arroyo, thence, to the Los Angeles River, for discharges during the prohibition period. Board staff is evaluating this request.

### **Sunshine Canyon Landfill**

Regional Board staff received final review comments from the Department of Water Resources which approved the three-dimensional slope stability analyses performed for the Phase II development of the Sunshine Canyon Landfill county expansion. Staff agreed with this approval and the Executive Officer transmitted a letter to Browning-Ferris Industries approving the Phase II expansion.

### **Azusa Landfill**

Azusa Landfill is located in a gravel pit in Azusa and operated as a Class III landfill which accepted municipal solid waste until October 1996. As the result of a Superior Court decision in September 1996, based upon a suit brought by the Metropolitan Water District and the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster(MWD), the State Board issued Order No. WQ 96-14 which prohibited Azusa Landfill from receiving municipal solid waste. Since that time, Azusa Landfill remained a Class III landfill, but has accepted no municipal solid waste. They have, however, continued to accept inert waste and treated hydrocarbon contaminated soil for disposal. On November 25, 1997, Regional Board staff met with representatives from the MWD and the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster to discuss closure requirements for the 80-acre unlined portion of the Azusa Landfill.

Staff is currently reviewing the closure schedule for the landfill and will be contacting the landfill operator to begin closure activities according to a specific time schedule.

### **Septic Tank Workshop**

Regional Board staff held workshops on December 12, 1997, in Ventura, and December 15, 1997, in El Monte to solicit ideas from interested parties concerning the development and implementation in this Region of a policy regarding the use of septic tanks. Board Chairman Jack Coe and Vice-Chairperson Charlotte Craven attended this special workshop. Staff will follow-up on the information received at the workshops and report various options to the Board at a future meeting.

### **Freedom of Information Act and Public Records Act Requests for the Month of November 1997.**

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and Public Record Act (PRA) requests to review or copy public documents are a very important part of the work at the Regional Board. The FOIA and PRA cover most of the documents at the Regional Board. Recently, the State legislature adopted

statutory language requiring that these requests be tracked by the Regional Boards. The FOIA and PRA require agencies to provide a response on the availability of the requested document within 10 working days (FOIA) or 10 calendar days (PRA) of receiving the request. The Regional Board has developed a procedure and a database to track these requests.

During the month of November, ten FOIA/PRA requests were received and processed, and in all cases, a response was provided within the mandated time frame.

### **Boeing-Rocketdyne Santa Susana Field Laboratory - Public Meeting**

With the prediction of El Nino, the public has expressed concern about heavy rain which may carry pollutants from Boeing-Rocketdyne's Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) into the local stream channels. Local newspapers in Simi Valley also raised similar concerns. The Santa Susana Field Laboratory has been the site of various nuclear and rocket tests and is also in the processes of cleaning up soil and groundwater contamination.

In order to address the public's concerns, Wayne Chiou and Dennis Dasker of the Board staff participated in a public meeting held by USEPA at the Simi Valley Senior Citizens Center on December 9, 1997. The main subject of the meeting was SSFL's NPDES permit and Wayne Chiou gave a presentation which included: an overview of the Board's NPDES obligations; details of SSFL's surface water discharge permit; the quantities, quality, and locations of the surface water that has been discharged from the site; SSFL's compliance record; and Boeing-Rocketdyne's preventative measures to minimize pollutants entering the local stream channels. After the presentation, Board staff and USEPA representatives responded to questions. It was noted that Boeing Rocketdyne's NPDES permit is scheduled for renewal in the first half of 1998 and the public will have an opportunity for input in the permit process.

### **San Fernando Well Investigation Program**

Representatives of USEPA and Regional Board staff met on December 10, 1997 to address several important issues regarding the status of Well Investigation Program in San Fernando Valley. Among the subjects discussed were the current budget and duration of the program. Board staff informed USEPA representatives that the program is moving on schedule and it may be completed at the end of 1998 and, as a result, USEPA has agreed to extend the funding until December 1998. Board staff noted that few cases will still be active after the end of 1998, including Lockheed and other cases that will be conducting cleanup under cost recovery program.

### **Quarterly Report - Refinery & Tank Farm Investigations and Cleanup**

The Powerine Oil Company in Santa Fe Springs, to whom the Board ratified a Prospective Purchaser Agreement (PPA) in August 1997 for development of the Lakeland Property, submitted an Interim Remedial Measures Work Plan on December 28, 1997, as agreed. Staff met with Powerine and discussed modifications necessary for the work plan to be acceptable.

### **Department of Defense (DOD) Program**

An agreement designating this Regional Board as the Lead Agency at 8 of the 15 DOD facilities in this Region was signed by Stan Phillippe, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), and Harry Schueller, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), on October 28, 1997. DTSC was previously the lead at all DOD facilities

### **Los Angeles Contaminated Sediment Task Force**

The Executive Officer and Assistant Executive Officer met with the Port of Long Beach on January 9, 1998. The purpose of the meeting was to share perspectives on the implementation of SB 673 (Karnette) which has provided funding for the Regional Board to participate in the Los Angeles

Contaminated Sediments Task Force. Leadership of this Task Force has been provided by the Army Corps of Engineers since the focus of the group is the management of sediments removed by dredging activities. The Executive Officer and Assistant Executive Officer will be attending the January 21st meeting of the Task Force.

SB 673 requires the Regional Board and the Coastal Commission to help coordinate the efforts of the Task Force, to enter into a working arrangement with the USEPA and Army Corps, and to assist in the coordination of an annual workshop. The Coastal Commission has the principal responsibility for the development of a long-term management plan for dredging and disposal of contaminated sediments.

### **Public Outreach**

On December 5, 1997, Keith Elliott made a presentation discussing the site closure process for contaminated properties to the Real Estate Finance Group at Wells Fargo Bank, Los Angeles.

On December 8, 1997, Jim Ross was a guest lecturer at Chaffey College discussing the Cleanup of "Brownfield" sites.

On December 3, 1997, Dennis Dickerson, attended the monthly meeting of the Los Angeles County Stormwater Permit Executive Advisory Committee.

On December 8, 1997, Dennis Dickerson attended the regular meeting of the South Bay Council of Governments and provided comments on the Los Angeles Stormwater NPDES permit.

### **Watershed Management**

#### **Calleguas Creek Watershed**

The Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan Habitat/Recreation/Open Space Subcommittee is closely involved with a grant the California Coastal Conservancy has been awarded for preparation of a Calleguas Creek Watershed Wetland Restoration Plan. The subcommittee met on December 16 to discuss the project's scope of work. The group also heard a presentation by a representative of Fish & Game on the Natural Community Conservation Planning process.

The Water Quality/Water Resources Subcommittee is in the process of drafting a Water Resources/Water Quality Chapter in the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan. Subcommittee members have developed a list of their goals and objectives for water quality and water resources and are working to clarify participants' goals and objectives, identify possible solutions to problems, pinpoint concrete actions which will be taken to address the problems, filter out long-term from short-term goals, and reach agreement on what issues to deal with first.

#### **The subcommittee's next meeting is scheduled for January 23.**

The Flood Protection/Sedimentation Subcommittee met on December 8. The group is continuing to refine their list of flooding, drainage, erosion and sedimentation, and flood water conservation and re-use considerations and are proceeding to prioritize these items.

A new group is being formed, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Subcommittee. Its first meeting is pending.

The first meeting of the Public Education/Outreach Subcommittee will take place on January 21.

The full Management committee last met on November 5. Information about the management committee and its subcommittees can be found at "[www.calleguas.com](http://www.calleguas.com)".

Staff are reviewing the last draft of the Calleguas Creek Characterization Study workplan from the watershed's dischargers and are currently preparing comments.

### **Los Angeles River Watershed**

The Los Angeles/San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council met on December 17. Meetings are generally held at the Los Angeles County Public Works facility in Alhambra at 900 S. Fremont Avenue on the third Wednesday of each month. The Watershed Council has a number of committees including Finance and Representation, Three-Year Watershed Study (interaction with LA River Task Force), Stakeholder Programs, Public Education and Outreach, Projects, and Research. The Finance and Representation Committee has made a plea for financial support for the Watershed Council. Shirley Birosik, of Board staff, made a short presentation on the Board's Watershed Management Initiative and our permitting approach for the Los Angeles River Watershed. Copies of our draft Water Quality Characterization Report of the watershed were also distributed with comments due back from the public by late January.

### **Santa Monica Bay Watershed**

Malibu Lagoon Task Force and Advisory Council meetings were held on December 16. The Lagoon Task Force has been meeting to find a resolution to lagoon water level problems. The Advisory Council has been in existence for a number of years and serves as a forum for discussion of local watershed issues.

The Malibu Creek Watershed Volunteer Monitoring Subcommittee met on December 8.

Other Santa Monica Bay Watershed activities are covered under the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project item.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

### **Summary of Enforcement Actions- November 1 - 30, 1997**

#### **Formal Enforcement Actions**

Time Schedule Order.....1

#### **Administrative Enforcement Actions**

Permit violations.....8

California Water Code violation.....1

#### **Administrative Enforcement Actions for Overdue Reports**

Discharge monitoring reports.....2

Technical monitoring reports.....13

Site assessment plans.....5

Site assessment report.....11

Remedial Action Plan.....5

#### **Administrative Enforcement Actions for Stormwater Permits**

Failed to submit Notice of Intent for coverage under the General Industrial Permit.....1

Total Enforcement Actions for November.....47

**SPILLS REPORTED DURING NOVEMBER 1997**

**All Reported Spills**

Chemical.....13  
Crude oil.....7  
Diesel.....14  
Gasoline.....4  
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....6  
Oil.....5  
Sewage.....6  
Waste water.....4  
Vapors.....1  
Total.....60

**Spills Which Entered Waterways or Waters**

Chemical.....4  
Crude oil.....2  
Diesel.....7  
Gasoline.....3  
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....4  
Oil.....5  
Sewage.....4  
Waste water.....2  
Total.....31